Foto Franco D'Alessio

VICISSITUDES OF THE VILLA D'ESTE

The construction of the villa cost Cardinal Ippolito over 100,000 ducats and a great deal of additional expense was incurred by his successors, especially Cardinal Alessandro d'Este. The citizens of Tivoli were not very enthusiastic about the Cardinal's huge undertaking, and, as a matter of fact, they accused him of wasting tax money and failing to perform his duty towards the community. They complained of the fact that in order to make room for his garden, he had ordered the razing of a hospital that was never rebuilt and that he had paid only token sums for the land he had confiscated. He was also much criticized for having caused great bother to the people living near the villa grounds as he had barred access to their homes from the lower city. A number of local citizens banded together so they could formally charge the Cardinal with these alleged abuses but the matter never went any further and in fact when the Cardinal died, the charges died with him.

For the sake of the record, we must add that Ippolito always was exceedingly generous with the people of Tivoli, for it was clear from his behavior that he had chosen Tivoli as his second homeland. For example, he had the Cathedral rebuilt and commissioned considerable restoration of the church of Santa Maria Maggiore (now San Francesco); he fortified the city and levelled the road leading to it (previously the road was steep and treacherous for man and beast). When in 1564 the Aniene flooded Tivoli with tragic consequences for the local population, he paid for the most urgent repairs out of his own pocket. The sum was later supplemented by a donation of 1900 *scudi* offered by Pope Pius IV then on a visit to Tivoli. He had also strongly supported a motion that the city's wealthiest citizens band together in an association to set up a local wool factory which would have been of great benefit to commerce; for this purpose he had decided to allocate a large sum of money, but the proposal was never taken into serious consideration by those who counted (Beni). He was also a forerunner of modern ecologists. In fact, as Zappi reports, the Cardinal ordered that care be taken of the surrounding moun-